

The Law of the Spirit

Rom 8:1-2

1 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

*2 For the **law of the Spirit** of life in Christ Jesus **hath made me free from the law of sin and death.***

I. Introduction

1. In Wednesday night's online service, I introduced a mini-series called "Apostolic Distinctives," referring to some teachings that are distinct or unique about us.
2. The first lesson was called, "How to Get Ready for Heaven," and was based on Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus.
3. Jesus said you cannot enter into the kingdom of God unless you are born of the water and Spirit.
4. His later teaching gave further explanation of the meaning of being born of water and Spirit when He spoke of the need to be baptized and be filled with the Holy Ghost.
5. And obeying Jesus, the apostles continued teaching and practicing that in the Book of Acts, emphasizing baptism in the name of Jesus Christ, and being filled with the Holy Ghost.
6. That is why we call it an Apostolic Distinctive—the apostles taught this distinct doctrine, which in Acts 2:42 is called the "Apostles Doctrine."
7. If you follow what the apostles taught, you become distinctly apostolic!
8. So the question I put before us on Wednesday night was: Do you want to go to heaven? When you are ready to believe that Jesus died for your sins and rose again, you make that personal to you when you are born of water and Spirit.
9. I want to tell you a story about how I watched this born again experience dramatically transform a friend of my brother's back when we first got in church.

II. Testimony of James and Bobby

A. James got in

1. Before we got in church, my next older brother, James, was a professional musician in a nightclub band, as was his friend Bobby.
2. The nightclub was somewhat of a family-friendly restaurant early in the day and evening, because I remember going with him a few times.
3. But when my brother received the Holy Ghost, he got it real good. I have a very clear memory of a service right after we started going to church.
4. His experience in God was all new to him and he tried to going back to the job, perhaps not knowing for sure what to do.

5. But for him to get to the nightclub in time, we had to leave the evening service before it was over.
 6. So we left a red-hot Holy Ghost service that included old-time fired-up worship and prayer.
 7. My brother was dancing in the Holy Ghost and speaking in tongues. I mean to the degree that I was embarrassed of him. I don't believe I had received the Holy Ghost yet.
 8. I liked going to this church, but my brother's degree of passion was several steps above mine at that point.
 9. I was still a cool teenager between my 8th and 9th grade year.
 10. Plus, I was a little concerned about him. As he was driving to work, he was still speaking in tongues.
 11. And when we arrived at the nightclub, he was still speaking in tongues.
 12. His band leader, Sparky, told him to get out his bass and get ready for the first song.
 13. James answered back speaking in tongues. Sparky asked what was wrong with him. He answered speaking in tongues with a big smile on his face.
 14. Sparky told him to go home. I don't believe he ever went back.
- B. Bobby got in
1. However, the passion of James' experience in God made a big impression Bobby, who was the drummer in the band. Bobby was older and was already part of the club life, but he saw something very different in James.
 2. It wasn't long before Bobby visited church, and it wasn't long before Bobby was baptized and filled with the Holy Ghost, talking in tongues just like James!
 3. Something remarkable happened to Bobby. He gave up drinking and clubbing and started to invite his family to church. First his girlfriend whom he then married.
 4. Then his parents, then his brother and sister, his uncles and aunts, nieces and nephews.
 5. In a fairly short time, an entire section of our church was filled with Bobby's family.
 6. Not to mention, we now had professional musicians playing music in church!
 7. I learned to play the piano playing along with them.
 8. From life of alcohol, and I don't know what other drugs, nightclubs, and the party life, to winning about 20-30 souls and playing music in the church, Bobby's life was changed.
 9. Something changed Bobby's course from a life of sin headed for destruction, to a life given to God and being responsible for bringing many to God.
- III. Repentance brings Grace
- A. Evil consequences tied to evil choices
1. I told you this story because I wanted to make a connection with some principles of scripture related to finding a new life in God.
 2. It is great to hear stories of transformation like this, but there are other stories that describe awful details of the Before Christ period.

3. Each of us who have been filled with the Holy Ghost and seen that kind of transformation, all have a story to tell of what it was like before we surrendered to God.
 4. When we were instead indulging in a life of pleasing self through whatever ways we could. Through alcohol, drugs, lust, fights, often hurting those we loved and who loved us.
 5. You see there is a principle at work there called the [slide] **law of the harvest**. Where sin is operating, the consequences of sin will follow.
Gal 6:7 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.
 6. Put another way, you will reap what you sow.
 7. The Apostle Paul called it the [slide] **law of sin**:
*Rom 7:23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into **captivity to the law of sin** which is in my members.*
 8. The law of sin holds us in captivity, binding our sinful choices to reaping sinful consequences.
 9. Like the law of gravity ties us to the earth, the law of sin brings people down with its consequences, or “wages”, of sin as this passage puts it:
*Rom 6:23 For the **wages of sin** is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*
 10. Sin has a payday, and it is an unpleasant one if you continue in sin until payday.
- B. Repentance tied to mercy
1. But there is something that can modify the negative consequences of the law of sin. That is the law of the spirit:
Rom 8:1-2
1 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.
*2 For the **law of the Spirit** of life in Christ Jesus **hath made me free from the law of sin and death.***
 2. Do you see that very important phrase? This law, the law of the Spirit, is a higher law than the law of sin, and it has power to make us free from sin, and will undo and cancel out, the consequences of the law of sin.
 3. For instance, sin shackles us with control, dominance, guilt and condemnation.
 4. But the law of the Spirit, removes condemnation, it removes shackles, and even removes the sting of death.
1 Cor 15:55 O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?
 5. The law of the Spirit brings with it something very beautiful called God’s grace.
*Rom 6:14 For **sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.***
 6. You can call this the law of grace. The Law of the Spirit comes with God’s grace.

7. If you were living under the condemnation and dominion of the law of sin, [slide] **the Law of the Spirit** and grace is a higher law, meaning it **supersedes the law of sin and death and destroys the condemnation and dominion of sin!**
 8. Ok, let's move on from the laws and apply that to Bobby's story, and even your own story.
- C. Bobby's turnaround
1. When Bobby started coming to church, he made a decision to turn away from following after sin. So he made a trip to the altar and repented of his sins.
 2. And once he made that step of faith and got baptized and filled with the Spirit, the law of sin stopped its strong domination over him.
 3. Before he took that step of faith and while he was living under the law of sin, there was zero chance that he could have manufactured the kind of joy needed to win his whole family to church.
 4. But once **the Law of the Spirit took over**, God wrote Bobby a new story. And God wants to write a new story for you!
- D. The Law of the Spirit
1. I want to return to the amazing passage in Romans 8 to see that freedom as a promise:
Rom 8:1-2
1 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.
*2 For the **law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.***
 2. As I mentioned, on Wednesday night I taught about being born of water and Spirit that removes our sin and puts God's power within us to live like a new creature in Christ.
 3. That scripture says when you quit walking after the flesh and start walking after the Spirit, that is evidence that "the law of the "Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" is now working in you.
 4. I was there when Bobby received the Holy Ghost and witnessed the start of the influence of the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.
 5. When he received the Holy Ghost, the **Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus** made him free from the law of sin and death.
 6. Receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost will do that to you.
- E. It is a promise
1. And another truth about the Holy Ghost you need to know is that it is a promise to you and your children:
Acts 2:38-39
38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.
39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

2. I just wonder how many in this room today want that promise for themselves and their families.
 3. Perhaps you will win so many family members and friends that you fill a quarter of the church with souls who want the same joy and delivering power you found in the Law of the Spirit!
- F. Changing choices changes consequences
1. I want to wrap up this morning by looking at how the Law of the Spirit changes the outcomes in our life.
 2. When we made sinful choices, they led to sinful consequences. That is the law of sin.
 3. But when we repent of our life of sin, we are making the statement to God that we want to leave that old way behind and start fresh with God.
 4. I need to emphasize, it is a step of faith. Not faith in your power to do right and to make right choices from here out, but it is faith in Jesus' offer of mercy and power to change you.
 5. When you take the step of faith to repent of your sins, you are acknowledging your need for Jesus' mercy, and He will forgive you because of that step of faith.
 6. **And [slide] when a person makes a change in their choices, different choices lead to different consequences in your relationship with God.**
 7. There is an entire chapter of the Bible that deals with that subject: Ezekiel 18.
 8. Look at the two verses that summarize the principles found there:
Ezek 18:21 But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die.
 9. And:
Ezek 18:26 When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them; for his iniquity that he hath done shall he die.
 10. So with making the right choice in mind, God made clear His desire:
Ezek 18:30-32
30 Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord GOD. Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin.
31 Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel?
32 For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye.
 11. The apostle Peter put it this way:
2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.
- IV. Conclusion

1. Where there is repentance, there is mercy. And where there is mercy, there will be a Holy Ghost outpouring so the Law of the Spirit can begin operating in your life.
2. It takes no time for you to get your relationship fixed with God. But the consequences of past sinful choices may linger for a time, but the point is, keep choosing God.
3. A lifetime spent following after the Law of the Spirit reverses sin's dominion and control:
Rom 6:14 For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.
4. It is time to find mercy and a filling of the Holy Ghost.
5. Remember the Holy Ghost is a promise to you and your children:
Acts 2:38-39
38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.
39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.
6. Everyone repent, everyone seek mercy, everyone seek a filling or refilling of the Holy Ghost.
7. Let us begin/or continue a walk in the Law of the Spirit.